

## Off-stream Storage Workshop

Sponsored by: Tehama County Flood Control and  
Water Conservation District, DWR, and CALFED

Thursday, November 6, 1997; 7 - 9 p.m.  
Red Bluff Community Center  
1500 South Jackson Street, Red Bluff, California

### EDITED TRANSCRIPT

#### Question and Answer Period:

**Sandy Flournoy, President of Thomes Creek Watershed Association.** Question: The CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) targets Thomes Creek as a potential spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and in the Off-stream Storage Workshop they said the project would result in creek flow reduction which would limit spawning habitat. How do you reconcile this contradiction?

**Stein Buer, CALFED.** Answer: Right now I don't know the answer to that. But what we are really looking for as we go forward with these studies are ways to optimize the use of both water and habitat and making sure as well that we are protecting the existing property owners. We anticipated that there might be some interest in ERPP tonight and we asked Dick Daniel to be here in case you have questions about that. If you want to get into details on ERPP questions you might want to defer them until a little bit later in case there are specific questions related to Off-stream Storage.

I'm not sure that they (*the facts cited in the question*) are necessarily contradictory. My response is that we need to look at it. It may be possible to pick off some of those high river flows which may be damaging to the fish and which later provide additional flows for maintaining habitat downstream. I'm not a fisheries expert of course, but the question is how can you best balance the various demands on the system.

**Charles Willard, Tehama County Supervisor.** He suggests that Sandy talk to Dick Daniel in more detail. He points Dick out in the back of the room.

He asks out of curiosity - How many people are here from Tehama County? Glenn? Shasta? Butte? Colusa? Plumas? (show of hands after each County is named) He comments: Boy, we got good coverage here tonight.

**Smokey Ripples, Board of Directors for RTR.** Question: I am most concerned about your discussions of the schedule of this thing. It seems that it took from '92 to '95 to establish CALFED. Which was established, I guess, to take another look. And I was wondering, how long this look might take? You said that there was going to be a 2-year phase of studies. Is this first phase prior to the environmental, control and cost phase? Are you talking about 2 years total or are you talking about the first phase taking 2 years and then whatever it takes for the subsequent phases? Which is it?

**Naser J. Bateni, District Chief, Northern District, DWR.** Answer: We are talking about 2 years for the first phase of the project, meaning looking into the feasibility of the reservoirs that we mentioned here. Most of the studies that we have to do will take about 2 years to complete. For example, USFWS requires us to do 2 seasons of rain to evaluate the shrimp. This first phase is going to take 2 years and during that time CALFED will put the EIR/EIS out. We go from this phase 2 years from now to the environmental documentation process. After 2 years they will get to a specific project and EIR/EIS. I hope this answers your question.

**Smokey Ripples.** Question: Are you people taking advantage of the studies done in the early 1960s by the California University System, i.e., UC Davis, that went over this ground, I've been told, a number of times? Are we having studies to make a living studying or are we looking for solutions?

**Naser J. Bateni.** Answer: Hopefully, we are looking for solutions. Douglas Denton has reviewed some of the studies that have been done. We are going to use any studies we can find. We are not going to do them again. We are going to meet with you. If you have some studies, please bring them to our attention, and we will be more than happy to look at them. .

**Clair Hill, Former Chairman, California Water Commission.** Question: I'd like to say you are doing a fairly good job of informing the people in this area and that was not always true in the past. I'd like to make one or two comments and then ask one or two questions. I hear the words continually "environmental damage". Many of these projects are "environmental enhancements". I've never seen a balance sheet on any project that balances these two out. I think you can cite many projects that have been built in the past. All you hear about them now is the "environmental damage" and they don't consider the "environmental enhancement" at all. I hope you will look at that.

Why don't you include Cottonwood Creek with the diversion into the Red Bank Creek?

**Stein Buer.** Answer: It is included. The Dippingvat Damsite diverts water from the South Fork Cottonwood Creek into Schoenfield Reservoir. So that is indeed part of it.

**Clair Hill.** Question: Also, I didn't hear much about conveyance using existing facilities.

**Naser J. Bateni.** Answer: Thank you for your nice words. Our purpose here is to inform you and bring this issue to you early in the process, and from the very beginning to keep you informed and get your input. Clair mentioned use of the existing conveyance - yes, we will look at existing conveyance systems. We are going to look at using the existing GCID Canal or the Tehama-Colusa Canal. We are going to see how we can divert water in the winter from those canals. Right now they are only operating during the summer. So they are constrained or have some kind of complexity. Doug mentioned this earlier.

The next issue you brought up was "environmental enhancement." You are absolutely right. The way we see it, if you have a reservoir - say Sites Reservoir, and we put the water into Sites Reservoir, as it was mentioned earlier. If you can exchange that water with agricultural water users, right there we enhance the Sacramento River by keeping flow in the river. We enhance the fisheries, we enhance the temperature, and we make more flow in the river in the summer time and during the fish migration. We will talk about these things and document them. Thank you for your comments.

**Clair Hill.** Question: I hear about cost. I agree that any water development will be extremely expensive. All the cheaper sites have been developed. I think there should be some discussion on this. Another thing is the Endangered Species Act. I think it is the most abused program we have ever had. The Longhorn Beetle stopped the repair of the dike in the Sacramento River and is a good example. There is only about 300 miles of those Elderberrys and I can't quite figure out how they are endangered. I think that's true of quite a few of the other so-called endangered species. I think that's about all. I may write you a letter.

**Bill Waite, Colusa County Supervisor and Colusa Basin Drainage District Board.**

Question: We have about 3 or 4 of our members and managers represented. You should probably have some of your staff come to our monthly meetings. We could probably give you a lot of information, especially on Sites-Colusa Reservoir. We are already looking at different projects, including one that would be part of the Sites Reservoir - Golden Gate on Funks Creek. It is important for you to get our input. This is the first we've seen of the conveyance facility from the Colusa Basin to the Sites Reservoir. I think you should have some meetings down in the southern end for the people of Glenn and Colusa counties, to get more information.

**Naser J. Bateni.** Answer: We sent out the invitation or the announcement to all the water users in the Valley all the way to Yolo County. We will be more than happy to come to your area to conduct a workshop. We are open to the idea.

**John Mills, Regional Water Council for Rural Counties on the CALFED Bay-Delta**

**Program.** Question: One thing we like about CALFED is that theoretically all of the agencies are together now and cooperating. As you know, Assistant Secretary Garamendi released the CVPIA implementation plan on Halloween and it should be commented on by November 14. If you don't have a copy of that plan I urge you to get one. One of the provisions in there is for more water acquisitions to make up the water they need for CVPIA restoration.

One of the things we have seen over and over in CALFED documents is the reliance on water transfers to handle environmental needs in the Bay-Delta. It shows up again in the Garamendi plan with the reliance on adaptive management. And that is some of the last San Joaquin River water, unless they raise Friant Dam and soak up what is left in the San Joaquin.

The CVPIA plan calls for 150,000 AF to be acquired in the Sacramento Valley in the next five years through a combination of ground water, surface water, and land fallowing. We think that is indigenous to the problem and we're glad to see you have some alternative storage because without new storage facilities being built -- we do have something of a dogma being established that we don't need new facilities built -- that if we can just move the deck chairs around the Titanic won't sink, and that's not going to hold water (no pun intended). We do need new storage facilities, and I'd like to see those sized to provide local service and not just service to the Delta. We shouldn't miss the opportunity to operate those reservoirs in conjunction with upstream reservoirs so that upstream areas could be serviced. The opportunity is built in.

I know the constraints in Prop 204, and I know what you can look for, because I helped write 204 so I know the problems, but we didn't mean to tie you in a ball. One of the things we want to see here is, you've got a very broad solution area. The solution area is the area to incorporate the maximum CALFED benefits, not just the problem area. The problem area is where we have to fix the problems, the benefits can be spread around the solution area. I not sure there is a question here, but I'm sure you have an answer.

**Charles Willard.** Answer: I was just going to ask you which part was the question. With that statement, I think we need to go back to the thought that this is a hearing on Off-stream storage tonight. This is certainly an area that has been supported locally. There is a seven county consortium that went together initially in response to CALFED.

**John Mills.** Comment: Yes, we are talking about off-stream storage but it is hard-wired to transfers, and there shouldn't be transfers without new storage!

**Steve Fitch, Representing Assemblyman Woods.** Comment: Re environmental benefits -- be sure to consider all of the wetlands you're going to be creating in these reservoirs. I hear you will be displacing range lands, but you will also be creating wetlands. That is one thing we don't have a lot of in California, except during floods.

**Vickie Newlin, Butte County Water Commission.** Question: Cost for the 2 year study. Where is the funding coming from for construction of off-stream storage and how will local government be impacted?

**Naser J. Bateni.** Answer: We only have funding from Prop 204 for this phase of the Study. We will give CALFED this information. They will take this information and incorporate it into the EIS on the project, which they will do several years from now. We are hoping to push this process forward and incorporate our work into the CALFED process and then get to the design and construction phase.

**Vickie Newlin.** Question: But the financial charts I've seen for CALFED only go for the next three years and then they drop off drastically.

**Stein Buer.** Answer: CALFED's future is fairly uncertain. It is a process that is currently funded through phase 2 and I think its ultimate success depends on the extent to which it meets the needs of the stakeholders and the agencies concerned. It also requires that the various stakeholders participate in a constructive manner so that a reasonable solution can occur. CALFED's charter extends through completion of a programmatic environmental impact document which is scheduled to be on the street in the Fall of next year. By programmatic, we mean that it is fairly general in nature and its intent is to map out the general course of a solution or strategy, with agreement on that. The presumption is that funding will be provided from the various CALFED agencies and other funding mechanisms, such as Prop 204 funds. We look forward to more specific engineering and environmental studies. I know it frustrating to hear that we go forward with study and study and study. But we have a thicket of laws to move through and very complex problems. California has grown to the point where the action of any one part of the State affects everybody else. There is just no quick and easy answer to that.

**Charles Willard.** Comment: Numbers I've heard are between 4, 12 or 19 billion dollars, by the time CALFED has moved through some kind of solution. If you and I have any idea where that money is coming from, it is going to come from different sources, probably, we hope the other guy will pay for it, of course, because we don't want to pay for that. We're going to have to look at an overall package and I think Stein referred to this when he said some of the funding will come from one area and some funding from another. In order to get that kind of financing we're probably going to see some ballot issues, and we're probably going to see some other things. I think the more important question is .. where do the local people come in? That's an important factor. I think we have to realize that as we move through these studies and if they pick out one of these projects and say yes..we're going to do it .. the local people, the local government entities have to be at the bargaining table, sitting down, represented, and discussing how much

of that water do you get, and how much do we get? What are we going to pay for it, and what are you going to pay for it, and what are the benefits? It's too late after these negotiations have already been put together and somebody from somewhere else owns, controls, operates, and uses that land and water resource that's in your County.

I think this meeting is important, it is helpful, a "heads up" if you will. If you begin to watch the process and realize that when we get beyond the stage of negotiating whether it is feasible or not to do .. that is when you better be in there. I had better be in there. And we had better be talking very seriously about how this is going to happen and how those effects will be helping us or hindering us. That's going to be a real critical stage.

**Forrest Sprague, Chief of Staff, Senator Johannessen's Office.** Comment: Please don't anybody misinterpret my inquiry. Sen Johannessen is most pleased that there is some discussion for additional water sources in the North State. It's a priority for us depending upon what its use is and where the water is going to go. Having more storage in the North State is a good thing. No doubt about it.

I'd like to see a show of hands, if I can, of those people in the audience that knew about any conversation or potential plan or concept of a North State water storage plan or additional storage facilities before tonight? I want DWR to take note of this. (About one-third to one-half the audience raises their hands).

Now I'm going to give you some past observations on something. You know about the State Water Purchase Program, the six-seven public hearings we had up here in the North State, since May, June, and July. Without exception, several people asked DWR representatives to talk about the State Water Purchase Program and if DWR was looking at any additional water storage in the North State. The answer was unequivocally no, every time.

Dick, you're going to think I'm picking on you, but I'm not. I'm going to recount a conversation you and I had last summer when we were looking at Sites Reservoir. I described to you Senator Johannessen's concept of several reservoirs or a complex of reservoirs from Yolo County clear up to Shasta County that would be for off-stream storage. The idea would be to provide for flood control, groundwater recharge, some possible spring water and irrigation needs, as well as environmental concerns. I asked you then, if you recall, where did that concept fall on your environmental ledger, and you indicated it was on the negative side as opposed to the positive side. I asked what can we do to get it over to the positive side. You indicated that there wasn't anything we could do because CALFED's job description and your job description said that you could not look at North State environmental benefits or storage and that you were strictly focusing on the main Bay-Delta fix. And that is where you had to put your effort. If there were any off-stream storage facilities that you could possibly put an environmental shine on, it would be because every acre-foot stored in the foothills was an acre-foot of Sacramento River water that you could use for the Bay-Delta fix. Again, I'm not trying to be critical, but just trying to recount the conversation. The reason for that was the water would be too warm for your needs in the Sacramento River.

Most recently, Bob Potter spoke on September 19 at a Yolo County/Woodland Chamber of Commerce meeting where he again was asked, "Is DWR looking at any North State storage facilities?" He said, "No, absolutely not". So the question I have to ask is, you see the hands of the people here not familiar with any North State off-stream storage facilities. The reason these people are here is they are concerned about the groundwater and the transfers, and all the other things, and they are very well aware of that. But unaware that you are planning on the

solutions to the problems as well in relationship to the storage. I have to look at this and say not only does the left hand not know what the right hand is doing, but the thumb doesn't know what the index finger is doing on this stuff. Or else you've just now decided, hey, it might be a good idea to have some North State storage facilities up here. So, enlighten us. Why is this just now being unveiled to the general public? Thank you.

**Naser J. Bateni.** Answer: I would like to thank Forest for supporting us in this project tonight. I think we have some homework to do within our organization. If Forest is correct, if some of our management doesn't know we are studying this project, then I have some homework to do.

**Stein Buer.** Comment: I would like to point out the question of how Prop 204 studies should go forward was not one that was readily apparent to us. The question that CALFED and DWR had to face was, should DWR individually conduct a Prop 204 study or should it go forward as a CALFED project, or should we do it as a cooperative effort? After considering the fact that the law targeted essentially North of the Delta Off-stream Storage, we felt after considerable discussion, that it would be better if DWR-Northern District would take the lead. This didn't happen overnight. It happened over a series of discussions that started in the Spring and went through the Summer. Maybe the fault is ours for not keeping you informed. This is an evolutionary process. I think that the sharing of the study responsibilities with CALFED takes the broad brush approach to the legal and regulatory framework with the Prop 204 studies is good--our charge is a broader one, and DWR has agreed to carry the brunt of the local study. This makes sense too, because you have heard tonight they are eager to be accessible and to make sure that the expertise is available to you, to answer your questions, to be responsive to your concerns. It wasn't a clear-cut decision. It took a while for us to arrive at this and perhaps we've been tardy at conveying it upward to management.

Another point is that I saw a lot of hands out there -- that indicates they were aware something was happening. We are very early in the process. Schedules have been laid out, some study plans have been developed. We have a lot of flexibility left. We haven't spent all of the dollars yet. We're just beginning. I think we hate to come before you with absolutely no idea of what we're going to do at all. We could have called this meeting in the Summer and had nothing to tell you. But we thought it would make sense, and make the best use of your time, if we took a crack at it and came to you with some coherent plans and then get your input at that point. So that's how we got to this point here tonight.

**Charles Willard.** Comment: Forest, DWR is like one of those multiple personality people. DWR North State--we like those guys and get along with them. They give us information. DWR statewide--we don't know what's going on there and then there are some personality issues going on at a different level. I think that what you and I have experienced is that DWR will tell you we're not CALFED on one day and the next day they are a part of it. There is overlapping there. Stein referred to that. Perhaps a lack of communication at some level. We hope that will be facilitated. Especially, to let Bob know what's going on.

I see supervisors from Butte, Tehama, Glenn, Colusa, and Shasta Counties. These people are an important link for you with the State agencies. I appreciate their coming.

**Sandy Flournoy, President of Thomes Creek Watershed Association.** Question: A general engineering question: On all of these projects where they are diverting water, say out of Thomes Creek, is there a mechanism to return water during low flow times back into those creeks, or is it strictly diverting high flows into the reservoirs?

**Douglas Denton, Northern District, DWR.** Answer: Any time that you construct a reservoir on a stream you must consider the downstream water rights, number one. Number two you must consider any existing fishery or potential fishery that may occupy the system. I think basically that a reservoir on any of these streams would take the large peaks, store them, and meter them into some kind of conveyance system and then you would have an obligation to store enough additional water to keep this stream alive for a reasonable period of time. Probably longer than it would occur naturally in order to accommodate fishery restoration and maintenance needs. I think the reservoirs are going to have to be sized at a greater capacity than that which would only be needed to control and meter flows into the transfer systems.

**Sandy Flournoy.** Question: The water can flow both ways then?

**Douglas Denton.** Answer: It doesn't normally flow up hill! I think your question is what happens downstream of a reservoir system and whether or not it would dry up that system.

**Sandy Flournoy.** Question: No, there are concerns that flows aren't adequate during a certain time of the year. Perhaps that could be augmented if you had a storage system that can return water to the creeks in times of need. Let's talk about spawning in October when there's no water running in Thomes Creek. Thomes Creek has been targeted as a salmon spawning habitat. Thomes Creek needs water in October if you want to have salmon spawning habitat. Will this reservoir have the capability of returning water to Thomes Creek or creating water in Thomes Creek during that time?

**Doug Denton.** Answer: I can't answer that definitively. October is a tough month. It's at the end of summer. So you have to store it all summer. It's much easier, once the first flow has started, to maintain a particular flow after the first freshet. And maybe you could continue those flows longer into the spring than they otherwise would occur. We would have to handle that on a reservoir by reservoir basis. We would be consulting DFG and USFWS, the agencies that will help us along this path to environmental correctness.

**Stein Buer.** Comment: I think that is a very important consideration and it needs to be a part of our evaluation. Certainly, you know CALFED is interested in the ecosystem aspect of Thomes Creek watershed and we may have an opportunity here to provide an enhancement at the same time we pick up the flood flows, I think we would be remiss if we didn't look at that in detail. That's my view on it. I might also ask Dick if he has any additional comments on that at this point.

**Dick Daniel, CALFED.** Comment: Yes, I agree with what you said.

**Curt Hubbard, Thomes Creek Watershed Association.** Question: In all these talks about off-stream storage, my question is why not consider on-stream storage, so that we don't have to pump water out, and also we use a natural conveyance system to get downstream; instead of building new ones?

**Naser J. Bateni.** Answer: Proposition 204 basically authorizes us to work on off-stream storage. That doesn't mean CALFED cannot proceed on the same projects that you are talking about. They still have a number of reservoirs they are looking at. Some of them off-stream, some on-stream. What we are doing is because of what the law says. What we are going to do is evaluate off-stream storage. CALFED has some on-stream storage projects and I'll let Stein take it from there.

**Unknown Person.** Question: At a recent meeting in September in the Oroville Office in Glenn County, Terry Mills was speaking and the question was asked about instream storage and he said absolutely no instream storage is being considered anywhere in the State.

**Stein Buer.** Answer: In general, instream storage tends to have a very high environmental impact both to riparian and fisheries resources. When you look in detail at on-stream storage verses off-stream storage -- you generally find greater impact. In terms of engineering feasibility our CALFED Engineering staff has commissioned some preliminary pre-feasibility studies of on-stream storage including Shasta enlargement. This could have tremendous environmental impacts if it went forward and would be extremely expensive. Nevertheless, this is one of the most water rich areas of the State and could contribute to flood control and so on. That is one on-stream storage facility that has gotten some consideration. We have to recognize that CALFED's charge is to work toward ecosystem restoration. That's a balancing act. Working to return more healthy conditions to streams, returning some streams to a more natural flow pattern, allowing gravel movement, and so on and so forth. We are trying to keep an open mind. In general, we find that the environmental concerns about on-stream projects tend to be very daunting. Since you cited Terry Mills -- Terry's boss Dick is here and he may want to make another comment if he wishes to.

**Dick Daniel.** Answer: Environmental impact -- difficulties in trying to mitigate them. I wasn't present at the September meeting where you quoted Terry Mills. I was present at a conversation with Forest regarding storage reservoirs in Northern California. I'm flabbergasted at the way you have characterized that conversation if it was the one we had shortly after we toured the Sites Reservoir site in Northern California. There are many occasions where some of our environmental objectives can't be resolved in terms of flow on Thomes Creek and flow on some of the other creeks unless some small scale storage reservoir is built. We will have to evaluate the actual cost and environmental costs in achieving environmental benefits.

In the ERPP report we talked about storage for the environment. We talked about developing new supplies, we talked about augmenting instream flows through water purchase plans -- the kind of things John Mills was talking about. All of the different tools available for putting water into the stream are on the table, including some cases where it looks like the only option if we try to restore instream flows will be through storage. The kinds of things you were talking about at Thomes Creek are exactly what we were talking about. That is a very good example.

**Ralph Hinton, Northern District, DWR.** Question: I'd like to ask the audience to give us a little feedback about how we can better communicate. If you didn't know that we were starting these studies, then we are missing something -- we're missing some opportunity. Do you want to see this information in the newspaper? On TV? Do you want a meeting like this? How do you get your news? How do you find out what's going on in the world? Can you give us some feedback?

**Steve Fitch.** Answer: Outline clearly to us the key decision points. Are you going to make decisions that affect the folks up here? Then tell us at what point the decision is going to be made, and tell us ahead of that decision. Play the whole process to us on a time line and then agree ahead of time when you're going to come back, and then we'll know, we can prepare, we can make sure we read the documents. You can then successfully use the mailing list, the newspapers, TV, and all of the above.